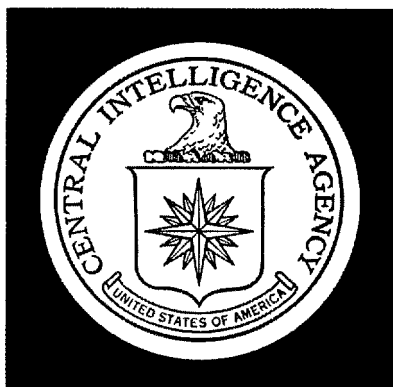


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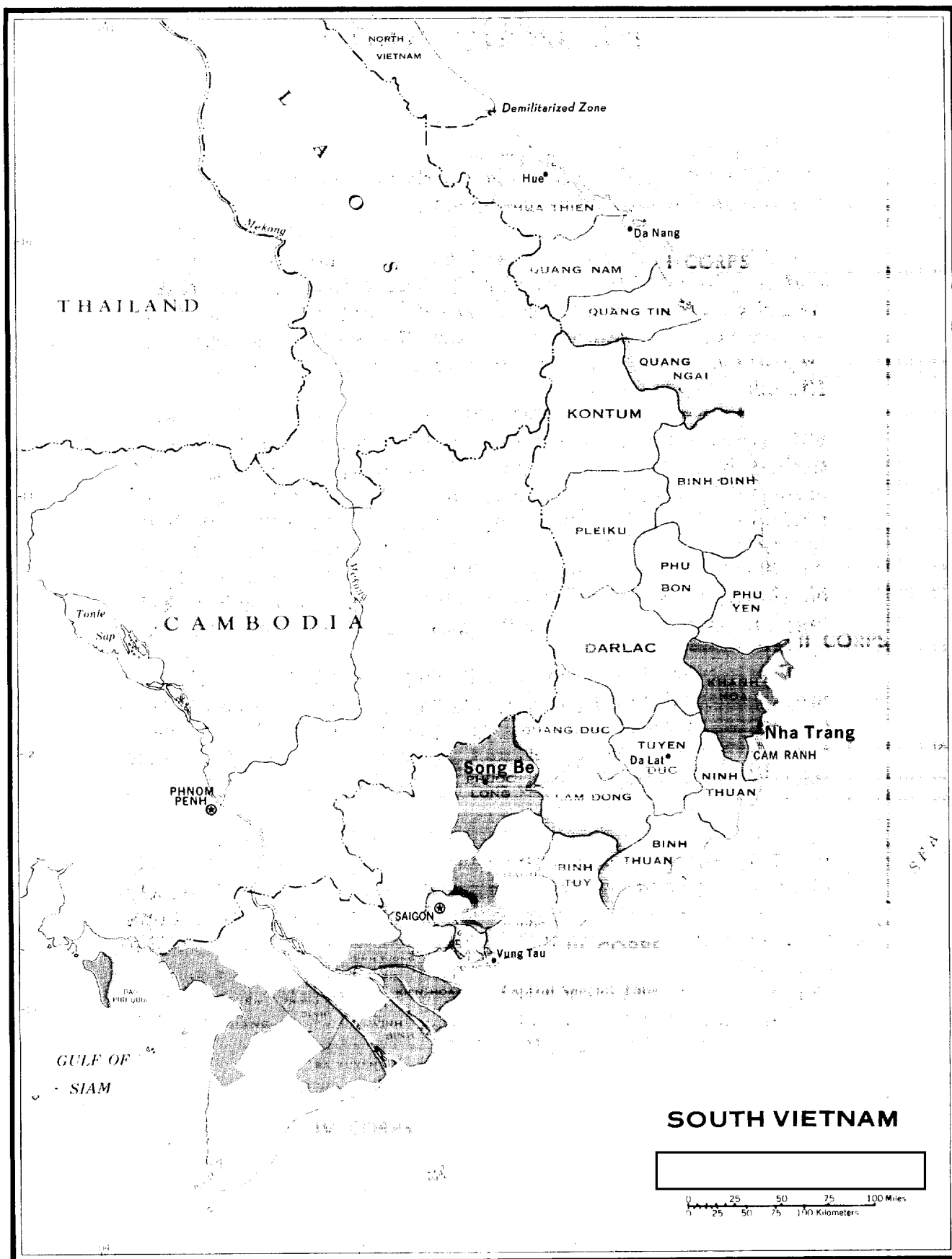
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*South Vietnam: While relatively light fighting continues in the Western Highlands, enemy forces appear to have stepped up their harassment elsewhere in the country.

On 24-25 November enemy forces attacked or harassed 38 South Vietnamese installations throughout the provinces of IV Corps. As part of this apparently well-planned and coordinated effort, district towns or provincial capitals in Dinh Tuong, Kien Hoa, Vinh Binh, Ba Xuyen, Phong Dinh, and Kien Giang provinces were shelled. As a result of all incidents at least 38 persons were killed and 130 wounded.

On the 26th, an enemy force fired about 32 mortar rounds into the Nha Trang air base complex located in the coastal II Corps province of Khanh Hoa. The majority of the shells impacted in the headquarters compound of the US 5th Special Forces Group which is located on the periphery of the air base. About 29 soldiers and airmen were wounded and 11 aircraft were destroyed or damaged as a result of the shelling. Because of damages inflicted on transport aircraft, the ability of the US Special Forces Group to resupply its camps and operations is temporarily impaired. The air base, however, remains fully operational.

Enemy forces in northern III Corps are maintaining their aggressive posture in Phuoc Long Province. On 25 November elements of the Viet Cong 275th Regiment attacked a Vietnamese Army outpost two and a half miles south of the town of Song Be. The defenders repulsed the enemy who lost 100 killed and 64 weapons captured. South Vietnamese forces suffered only six killed and 29 wounded. Enemy forces simultaneously shelled an adjacent district town, and two additional ARVN outposts in the Song Be area.

(continued)

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Enemy activity in the III Corps province of Bien Hoa, a relatively secure province in the past, may be increasing. The first significant engagement there in some time occurred on 24 November. In a one hour firefight the enemy killed 28 ARVN soldiers. On 26 November enemy forces executed a coordinated series of mortar attacks on ten allied positions, including two village headquarters.

The government is moving ahead with new appointments and the establishment of new agencies, amid indications that a formal opposition bloc is forming in the lower house.

The appointment of a Thieu adviser, Nguyen Van Huong, as secretary general in the president's office was announced on 25 November. A 19-man Central Revolutionary Development Council, was also created to oversee the entire pacification effort. The council, to be composed of cabinet ministers and ranking generals, will be chaired by Prime Minister Loc, and its secretary general will be Revolutionary Development Minister Tri.

Au Truong Thanh, in the meantime, [redacted] is attempting to form a third bloc in the lower house composed of independent deputies. In view of Thanh's opposition activities and the sentiments of the deputies supporting his efforts, it would appear that the bloc is intended to provide opposition to the already-established and essentially progovernment Democratic and Farmer-Worker-Soldier groupings. [redacted]

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NOTES

Japan: The new cabinet named by Prime Minister Sato over the weekend is potentially the strongest combination since he took office in 1964. Sato balanced the seven he retained--including Foreign Minister Miki and Finance Minister Mizuta--with 11 new men representing different party factions. The new combination could help strengthen his Liberal Democratic Party in next year's upper house elections and will, like the old cabinet, provide a solid front against forces opposing continuation of US-Japanese security ties, which come up for reconsideration in 1970. [REDACTED]

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Malaysia: Leftist-sponsored agitation against devaluation of Malaysia's old sterling-backed currency has led to a flare-up of Chinese-Malay racial strife, particularly on the island of Penang. Disorders on Penang over the past several days have caused at least eight deaths and left over 150 injured, and prompted the government to arrest local leaders of the small but vociferous Labor Party of Malaya. The government's capable police force should be able to keep the situation under control, but the current unrest dramatizes inherent communal animosities in Malaysia and shows how quickly agitation over other issues can degenerate into racial clashes. [REDACTED]

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